

1900- Jam 4:1-3 WHAT CAUSES QUARRELS?

Why is J asking his readers this **question**? Because he finds it amazing that humanity, especially Xns should be so much at war! He has just being talking about **peace**-making but the fact is mankind is much better at **war**-making! Between **1480-1941** (461yrs) there were 382 major wars! GB-78, France-71, Spain-64, Russia-61, Austria-52, Germany-23, USA-13, China-11, Japan-9! (Prof Quincy)

J really **challenges** them 'Why are **you** fighting?' He's probably witnessed them! Then further asks *What **causes** quarrels and what **causes** fights among **you**?* Why are there fights in your **homes** and of all places, **why** in the **Church**? Scottish Church History is a sad testimony that Xns go to war! Of course there **are legitimate** grounds for wars and for divisions in Churches. However, what James is on about here is **personal** fights, rather than national or denominational. Perhaps he's still thinking of the damage the **tongue** can do [chapter 3]! Anyway, let's get to the **root** of the matter.....

The ROOT of the MATTER

A story I've told before: **Tools** in carpenter's workshop in Israel. They were all fighting! One said it was **hammer's** fault – he was just too **noisy**! He said it was **saw's** fault – he just went back and fore all day long! He said it was the **plane's** fault – he just skimmed the surface! He said it was the **sandpaper's** fault – he rubbed people up the wrong way! He said it was the **screwdriver's** fault – he goes round in circles all day! He said it was the **ruler's** fault – he always measured people by his own standard! He said it was the **drill's** fault – he was just boring all day long!! Just then the **Carpenter** Himself Jesus Christ came in – he **used every one of them** and made a lovely pulpit and preached a sermon on 'Loving One Another'!!

The **lesson** of the story is: we are **ALL to blame** for the mess the world is in! We all see **other** people's weaknesses but **not our own**! But Jesus sees **ALL** our faults - and He comes and **heals** us!! *We really **do** believe the other fellow is to blame! But there is one thing sure: maybe the other fellow started the argument, but somewhere along the line **you** could have stopped it! We are all to blame for

continuing an argument! If we are not guilty of starting a fight we are guilty of **not finishing** a fight. The fact is **we too** are to blame!

Wars/fights *Is it not this, that **your** passions are at war **within you**?* J is saying the blame lies deep in the **heart** of man – not in the **circumstances** around us or in the **environment**! The problem is **people**! Not things! It is so easy to blame the irritations around us but really it is **ourselves** that **cause** the trouble and dissension! It is the way we **handle** the irritations and the annoyances!

The word for *passions* is the word from which we get **hedonism**! Actually **UNhealthy** desires! The desires for **personal** gratification! The desires which take no cognisance of, and makes no consideration of, anyone else – it is entirely for personal reasons! Same word as Peter used to describe those who crept in *irrational animals... They count it **pleasure** to revel in the daytime* [2P2:13] It did not matter who saw them – they had lost even their own sense of shame! It is the same word that Paul uses to describe men who are *lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God* [2Tim 3:4]

All of us by nature, have this unhealthy desires! Paul reminds Titus that *we ourselves were once foolish... slaves to various passions and pleasures* [Tit 3:3]! ***Pleasing self** is a sin that is hardly recognised today. With the demise of **self-examination** – a Puritan practice – we have lost the concept that pleasing ourselves instead of our Maker is a big sin! We are so self-centred now that we have **forgotten** that the whole object of life is to please God, ‘Man’s chief end...glorify God’.

J goes on to speak about the **motives** in **praying** for our desires! *you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions* [3] Motives **are important** – they can be the means of '**destroying**' a prayer and any good work!

Think of it - almost every argument in the world, every war – started because of an '**I want**'! When we fall-out with our children over ‘I want’! Adults too. ‘I want this piece of land’ (Abram/Lot) Someone somewhere wanted something and was determined to get it! They felt they **ought** to have it – no matter what! So, the **root** of all the problems in the world is actually in the **heart** of man...his desire for something he does not have! It is lusting after.....what he **wants**!

The BIG PROBLEM - RELATIONSHIPS

So the big problem with mankind is the **desires** of his **heart** - and it results in **destroying relationships!** It destroys our relationship with God - we are at **war with God** and at war with people! Consider.....

All human beings are made in the **image of God!** No other creature/animal has been made like we have - in **God's image!** Now God Himself is a **community of three** - He is a **Trinity!** God is **not unitarian** - He is **trinitarian!** Xnity is **distinct** from Judaism and Islam which believe in a **monotheistic** God! Xns believe God is a **Person** who can love, feel, desire, enjoy **fellowship!** God loved **before** He created people. Love is **essential** to His being! He always enjoyed the love/fellowship He had with His Son and the Holy Spirit. There was **no conflict, no quarrels, no fights** within the Trinity.

The Unitarian God did not have love before he created something to love or someone to love! The Unitarian God **had** to create something to love in order to exercise/employ/practise love! Love was not part of His **essence!** The Xn God has love by **nature!**

So, God has a **perfect** relationship with all the members of the Trinity! And God created man in a **perfect** relationship with Himself and with all the creatures He made! But man **broke** that relationship by sinning against Him! 'Adam, where are You?' is a cry from a God that is **hurt** over a broken relationship. God regularly met Adam in the Garden, then one day Adam did not turn up! Their relationship with God was broken! And **that** is the great **problem** with **mankind** and **society** all over the world - man has broken his relationship with his Maker! There are quarrels/fights among ourselves because we have fallen out with God. This relationship needs to be healed!

The **wonderful** thing is that it is **God** who **initiates** the reconciliation -not man! The call of the gospel is God calling man to **'Come back'!** That is why the Apostle John wants his readers to **join** him and his friends because their **relationship** with God and Jesus Christ has been **restored!** Listen to him: *We **proclaim** to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have **fellowship** with us. And our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus*

Christ [1J1:3 NLT] Fellowship means **relationship!** I love the way the NLT translates Paul's calling to the ministry *So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'* [1Cor 5:20 NLT] The gospel call is a call to be **reconciled** to God again!

The **only hope** for **peace** among the nations of the world is first to make peace with God! You will never sort the problems in Israel and Ireland unless there is first a reconciliation with God. It is our relationship with God that **affects all** other relationships. The first thing Adam did when he sinned was what? He **blamed** Eve! He fell out with Eve! There was the first human quarrel! Believe me, there was a **war** going on in Adam's heart. He knew he was at fault, yet he blamed Eve! Not only was the relationship broken between Adam and God; and Adam and Eve; but also between Adam and Adam! Adam's soul was in turmoil! He was **disagreeing** with his own heart!

Do you know that a whole set of new **emotions** arose in man's heart because of the broken relationship with God: **anger; shame; fear** - these emotions were not in it before the Fall!

But again we must **remind ourselves** - Jesus came to **heal us** from **all** the evil effects of the Fall! Do you know what the **two main functions** of the Church are? It is to **preach the gospel** and to **heal broken humanity!** Listen to Dr Luke writing about Jesus: *And He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal* [Luke 9:2] Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah - He would **heal the broken-hearted** [Isa 61:1,2]

Society, and we might say **especially** our society, needs to be healed from its many maladies! The world is full of trouble and the Church of God is the answer - we are called to go into that world with the gospel **AND** to **apply the principles** of God's Word to every area of life seeking to help every person we meet! Always remembering, that **we too** are sick, we too are sinners, but Jesus Christ had mercy on us, and He **invites** 'all and sundry', the most wicked, to come and taste that the Lord is good.